

SLAVERY AND ANTISLAVERY LITERATURE:

In the centennial year of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (issued January 1, 1863), it is appropriate to survey the literature on slavery and the antislavery crusade deposited in the University Library. Although by no means approaching in breadth the great collections at, for example, Cornell, Oberlin, and the New York Public Library, this literature is still both rich and varied; it stretches over a period of three centuries, encompasses three continents, and includes the great names in the antislavery movements of Great Britain and the United States. It is fitting that a state whose inception is inextricably linked with the slavery issue should possess such a collection.

Watson Library and its branches house upward of 750 volumes devoted to the subject of chattel slavery and its abolition. Only a fraction of the periodical literature and state papers is included in this total. A little more than half of these volumes is contemporaneous with the institution of slavery in the Western world, falling chiefly in the period prior to 1865. Of this contemporary literature, approximately two-thirds concerns the United States, and one-third the British Empire. There are also works on slavery in the Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and German languages.

To a very great extent Europeans exploited the resources of the New World with slave labor. American Indians, rather than Africans, were initially employed on Spanish plantations and mines, so much so in fact that their rapid decimation was viewed with alarm. Bartolomé de las Casas, known to posterity as the "Apostle of the Indians," attacked Indian servitude and achieved some success in persuading Spanish authorities to substitute Africans for Indians. His Le Miroir De la Cruelle, & horrible Tyrannie Espagnole perpetree au Pays Bas, par le Tyran

Duc de Albe, & aultres Commandeurs de par le Roy Philippe le deuxiesme (Amsterdam, 1620), is in the Summerfield collection. The library also has twenty-two modern editions of Las Casas' works, and fourteen films and microcards of his early editions.

Though John Hawkins carried slaves from Africa to Spanish America from 1562 to 1567, the English branch of this trade did not assume importance until the seventeenth century when Englishmen settled plantation colonies in the West Indian and southern mainland regions. Numerous accounts of African explorations and slave voyages are to be found in the collections of English explorers, of which the Library has those of Hakluyt, Purchas, and Churchill, as well as many modern critical editions. By the second half of the eighteenth century agitation against the horrors of the slave trade led to parliamentary investigation of this nefarious traffic. Between 1788 and 1791 a Committee of the House of Commons heard testimony from numerous participants in the trade, the outcome of which was immediate reform and eventual abolition in 1807. The student of slavery in the British Empire will find a microcard collection of British Parliamentary Papers in Watson Library a prime source of information.

Only a few Englishmen and Americans took up the cudgels against slavery in the seventeenth century. Among them were George Fox, the English Quaker who visited Barbados in 1671, and Samuel Sewell, Chief Justice of Massachusetts, who in 1700 wrote The Selling of Joseph, which contained arguments used by later antislavery writers.

The eighteenth century witnessed a growth in humanitarian sentiment. Much of this sentiment was directed at chattel slavery in the New World, giving rise to an impressive body of literature. Approximately fifty books and pamphlets on slavery in the Anglo-American world of the eighteenth century are available locally. Among these are works by Anthony Benezet, John Woolman, John Wesley, William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson and James Ramsay. To certain Englishmen it appeared incongruous for Americans to demand independence from Great Britain and at the same time retain Negro servitude. In a Fragment of an Original Letter on the Slavery of the Negroes: Written in the Year 1776 (London, 1784), Thomas Day exclaimed: "If there be an object truly ridiculous in nature, it is an American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves."

Though manuscript material is confined largely to the Kansas Collection, the interesting "Bill of Sale for Poppy" which is reproduced here is deposited in the Special Collections Department. It reminds us that Boston, the capital of abolitionism, had once tolerated Negro slavery.

Denmark's prohibition of the slave trade to her colonies in 1804 set in motion a chain of trade abolition and emancipation measures that extended well into the nineteenth century. In this century the governments of Britain, France, Holland, Spain, Brazil, and the United States took measures to halt the slave traffic and remove the blight of chattel slavery from the New World. As might be expected, these antislavery movements gave rise to a flood of literature that probed into dark recesses of the human condition. Local library resources include some 370 works on slavery in the period 1800-1865, not to mention the manuscripts, state papers, periodicals and books that concern this subject in part or in whole. Among the modern periodicals is a full set of The Journal of Negro History in forty-seven volumes.

*Boston November 15. 1784 I have this Day sold to Mr.
 Samuel Pitt of Boston a Negro Boy Named Poppy Nine
 years old for and in the full Confederation of Thirty six manhood
 Lunsplumming for which I promise to warrant and
 defend against the lawfull Clams of all and every Person or persons
 what ever as Witnessing hand.
 Witness Joseph Goodinge
 Samuel Ireland*

Bill of Sale for Poppy

The slavery controversy in Kansas is recorded in a variety of manuscript and printed works in the Kansas Collection. Contemporaries whose pens furthered the free-state cause were Horace Greeley, Charles Sumner, Eli Thayer, Russell Sage, Charles Robinson and James Henry Lane. Among the more colorful works is The Narrative of John Doy, of Lawrence, Kansas, "A Plain, Unvarnished Tale" (New York, 1860), which includes numerous incidents of the slave trade. This work has recently been supplemented by a companion piece, dramatically illustrated, entitled: "Adventures d'un Abolitionniste du Kansas dans le Missouri. Récit du Docteur John Doy," which appeared in Le Tour du Monde, presumably in 1862. Historians at this University whose publications concern different aspects of the Kansas struggle include Leverett W. Spring, Frank Heywood Hodder, and James C. Malin. Professor Malin's John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six (Philadelphia, 1942), includes chapters on the local pro-slavery press and local free-state press.

Our resources are especially rich in relation to Anglo-American aspects of the antislavery movement. The American side of the movement dates from 1760 when the second edition of Anthony Benezet's Observations on the Inslaving, Importing and Purchasing of Negroes was published in Germantown, Pennsylvania. At the other extreme is Dwight Lowell Dumond's Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor, 1961). Recent acquisitions include six American antislavery periodicals on microfilm. Further, William Ellery Channing, Horace Mann, William Jay, William Lloyd Garrison, James G. Birney, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria Child, William Goodell, Sarah M. Grimke, and John Greenleaf Whittier are some of the great names in the American antislavery movement whose works may be consulted here.

Books and pamphlets on the British antislavery movement have been augmented in recent years. The Crerar purchase includes some 330 items on slavery, of which nearly one half concern the British Empire. Noteworthy features of this collection are the proceedings of antislavery conventions, antislavery society periodicals, and parliamentary speeches and committee hearings. Moreover, there are seven volumes of English pamphlets on slavery containing seventy-nine

items, of which twenty-eight fall in the eighteenth century. Leaders of the British antislavery movement whose publications appear in the Crerar collection are, among others, James Stephen, Thomas Fowell Buxton, Henry Brougham, Zachary Macaulay, and George Thompson.

After winning the antislavery crusade in the Empire, British leaders turned their propaganda guns against the United States and other slaveholding countries. As Jubal Early, the Confederate general put it, "Having, as she considered, cast the beam out of her own eye, she could see more distinctly the mote in that of others."

In the age of Jackson there was a considerable interchange between the leaders of the two movements, not to mention the voluminous correspondence and circulation of antislavery tracts. Garrison, for example, attended English antislavery conventions, while George Thompson, the leading English antislavery orator; came to America to lecture and establish local branches of the movement. "He has retreated, leaving behind him nearly 300 Immediate Abolition Societies," reported an antislavery tract published in Glasgow in 1836. Nassau W. Senior, English economist, recorded in his American Slavery (London, 1856), "The sale of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is the most marvellous literary phenomenon that the world has witnessed . . . more than a million copies had been sold in England, probably ten times as many as have been sold of any other work, except the Bible and Prayerbook."

Illustrative of the extensive correspondence between antislavery leaders is A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858 Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, edited by Annie Heloise Abel and Frank J. Klingberg and dedicated to Professor Frank Heywood Hodder (Lancaster, 1927). The reform activities of Lewis Tappan and other leaders are discussed in Clifford S. Griffin's Their Brothers' Keepers; Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865 (New Brunswick, 1960). Professor Griffin views the antislavery movement as part of a larger movement which was led by men who, "while striving to change men's lives . . . stirred up the waves of moral and religious reform which have swept across the United States."

After 1833 the British West Indies provided Americans of both pro and antislavery leanings with a laboratory to test their theories concerning the consequences of slave emancipation. As might be expected, both sides found evidence to confirm their theories. George Fitzhugh, leading pro-slavery intellectual, published in 1857, Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters. He maintained that wage slavery in the North was far worse than Southern chattel slavery, and that the emancipated Negro in the West Indies "is really free, and luxuriates in sloth, ignorance and liberty, as none but a negro can. The mistake and the failure consisted in setting him really free, instead of nominally so." On the other hand, the American Anti-Slavery Society sent James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball to the West Indies with a view towards the "publication of facts and testimony collected on the spot." Their report of the success of the experiment was published under the title Emancipation in the West Indies. A Six Months' Tour in Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica, in the Year 1837 (New York, 1838).

If space permitted much more might be said of the merits of our library resources for the study of slavery and antislavery movements in the Anglo-American world. For example, these resources might be used to relate the economics of slavery to humanitarian movements in the two societies. It is clear that the economic decline of the sugar islands weakened the resistance of

slaveowners to the antislavery onslaught. On the other hand, recent studies have shown that slavery continued to be a profitable institution in the antebellum South. There are grounds for asserting that economic decline in the West Indies strengthened the hand of British antislavery forces, that prior emancipation in the British Empire strengthened the hand of American antislavery forces, and that while slavery remained profitable in the antebellum South, the American institution was indirectly affected by the economic demise of its Caribbean neighbors.

(Author's note: Lovell S. Jarvis, who served as my undergraduate research assistant under terms of the Carnegie Undergraduate Research Program, contributed to this survey with much diligence and competence, and made valuable suggestions for the drafting of the article.)

-- Richard B. Sheridan
Department of Economics